

Press Release

## **AWARD-WINNING ARCHITECT FRANCIS KÉRÉ TO DESIGN THE SERPENTINE PAVILION 2017**

23 June – 8 October 2017

(Closed 28 June)

Sponsored by Goldman Sachs

Press images at [serpentinegalleries.org/press](http://serpentinegalleries.org/press)



**Diébédo Francis Kéré**, the award-winning architect from Gando, Burkina Faso, has designed the Serpentine Pavilion 2017, responding to the brief with a bold, innovative structure that brings his characteristic sense of light and life to the lawns of Kensington Gardens.

Kéré, who leads the Berlin-based practice Kéré Architecture, is the 17th architect to accept the Serpentine's invitation to design a temporary Pavilion in its grounds. This annual commission invites an international architect to build his or her first structure in England (at the time of invitation). Since its launch in 2000, it has become one of the most anticipated events in the global cultural calendar and a leading visitor attraction during London's summer season of

**Serpentine Gallery**  
Kensington Gardens  
London W2 3XA

**Serpentine Sackler Gallery**  
West Carriage Drive  
Kensington Gardens  
London W2 2AR

T +44 (0)20 7402 6075  
W [serpentinegalleries.org](http://serpentinegalleries.org)

culture. Serpentine Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist and CEO Yana Peel selected the architect, with advisors David Adjaye and Richard Rogers. Inspired by the tree that serves as a central meeting point for life in Gando, Francis Kéré has designed a Pavilion that seeks to connect its visitors to nature – and to each other. An expansive roof, supported by a central steel framework, mimics a tree's canopy, allowing air to circulate freely while offering shelter against London rain and summer heat. Kéré has embraced the British climate in his design, creating a structure that engages with the ever-changing London weather in creative ways.

The Pavilion has four separate entry points with an open-air courtyard in the centre, where visitors can sit and relax during sunny days. In the case of rain, an oculus funnels water that collects on the roof into a spectacular waterfall effect, before it is evacuated through a drainage system in the floor for later use in irrigating the nearby parkland. Both the roof and walls are made from wood. By day, they act as shading, creating pools of dappled shadows. By night, the walls become a source of illumination as small perforations twinkle with the movement and activity from inside.

Kéré is committed to socially engaged and ecological design in his practice, as evidenced by his award-winning primary school in Burkina Faso, his pioneering solo museum shows in Munich and Philadelphia, and his immersive installation in the 2014 exhibition *Sensing Spaces* at London's Royal Academy.

Inspired by Kéré's stories of gathering, debate and community, the Serpentine Pavilion 2017 will host a new series of weekly community picnic talks, **Radical Kitchen**. On eight Wednesdays in July and August, a different London group or campaign organisation will assemble in the Pavilion to share their recipes for creating meaningful social change. Forging a connection with food, these picnics will be co-hosted and catered by Mazí Mas, a pop-up restaurant and award-winning social enterprise run by migrant women, which seeks to unearth the flavours of modern London for everyone.

The Pavilion is also the platform for a new summer of **Park Nights**, the Serpentine's annual series of experimental and interdisciplinary encounters. Practitioners in the fields of art, architecture, music, film, philosophy and technology have been commissioned to create new, site-specific work in response to Kéré's structure, offering unique ways of experiencing architecture and performance.

Now in its third year, **Build Your Own Pavilion**, the digital platform and nationwide architecture campaign conceived with funding support from Bloomberg Philanthropies, invites young people to consider the relationship between architecture and public space, to ask critical questions about the future of their cities and to design the cities in which they would like to live. The Serpentine's **Architecture Family Pack**, designed by artist Katie Schwab, is a chance for children and their families to experience Francis Kéré's 2017 Pavilion from playful and original perspectives.

Last year's Pavilion, an 'unzipped wall' structure by Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), was visited by more than 250,000 people. BIG's structure was one of the most-visited Pavilions to date, taking the top spot in *The Art Newspaper's* most visited Architecture and Design exhibitions in the world in 2016.

**Diébédo Francis Kéré, architect of the 17<sup>th</sup> Serpentine Pavilion, said:** "As an architect, it is an honour to work in such a grand park, especially knowing the long history of how the gardens evolved and changed into what we see today. Every path and tree, and even The Serpentine lake, were all carefully designed. I am fascinated by how this artificial landscape offered a new way for people in the city to experience nature. In Burkina Faso, I am accustomed to being confronted with climate and natural landscape as a harsh reality. For this reason, I was interested in how my contribution to this Royal Park could not only enhance the visitor's experience of nature, but also provoke a new way for people to connect with each other."

**Serpentine Galleries CEO, Yana Peel, and Artistic Director, Hans Ulrich Obrist, said:** "Francis Kéré's Pavilion highlights the power of simplicity by reducing architecture to its core elements, modelled in harmony with the natural context of Kensington Gardens. This Pavilion will be a space of conversation, collaboration and exchange. We share Kéré's belief that architecture, at its best, can enhance our collective creativity and sense of community, and push people to take the future into their own hands."

**Richard Gnodde, Vice Chairman of the Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and CEO of Goldman Sachs International, said:** "We are delighted to support the Serpentine's summer Pavilion programme for a third year running. Francis Kéré's design this year promises to celebrate the diversity, vibrancy and collaborative potential of communities, something we value deeply at Goldman Sachs."

**David Glover, Technical Consultant, said:** "The Serpentine Pavilion is about the opportunity of using everyday materials and techniques in innovative and creative ways that challenge our perception of architecture. Francis Kéré and his team have achieved this by creating a Pavilion that, through the use of colour and form, will continually morph under the influence of light, shadow, its users and the surrounding park to surprise and delight the visitor."

The annual Serpentine Pavilion commission has become an international site for architectural experimentation, presenting projects by some of the world's greatest architects, from Zaha Hadid in 2000 to Bjarke Ingels Group in 2016.

Technical Advisor: David Glover

Engineering and all technical services: AECOM

Goldman Sachs is headline sponsor of the Serpentine Pavilion 2017.

**For press information please contact:**

Nancy Groves, [nancyg@serpentinegalleries.org](mailto:nancyg@serpentinegalleries.org), +44 (0)20 7298 1544

Rose Dempsey, [rosed@serpentinegalleries.org](mailto:rosed@serpentinegalleries.org), +44 (0)20 7298 1520

V Ramful, [v@serpentinegalleries.org](mailto:v@serpentinegalleries.org), +44 (0)20 7298 1519

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**Notes to Editors:**

**Diébédo Francis Kéré** is the principal architect at **Kéré Architecture** based in Berlin, founded in 2005. Kéré was born in 1965 in Gando, Burkina Faso, west Africa and trained at the Technical University of Berlin. Kéré Architecture has been recognised nationally and internationally with awards including the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (2004) for his first building, a primary school in

Gando, Burkina Faso; LOCUS Global Award for Sustainable Architecture (2009); Global Holcim Award Gold (2011 and 2012); Green Planet Architects Award (2013); Schelling Architecture Foundation Award (2014) and the Kenneth Hudson Award – European Museum of the Year (2015).

Projects undertaken by Francis Kéré span countries including Burkina Faso, Mali, China, Mozambique, Kenya, Togo, Sudan, Germany, and Switzerland. He has taught internationally including the Technical University of Berlin and he has held professorships at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and Accademia di Architettura di Mendrisio in Switzerland.

Kéré's work has recently been the subject of solo exhibitions: *Radically Simple* at the Architecture Museum in Munich (2016) and *The Architecture of Francis Kéré: Building for Community*, Philadelphia Museum of Art (2016). His work has also been selected for group exhibitions *Small Scale, Big Change: New Architectures of Social Engagement*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2010) and *Sensing Spaces*, Royal Academy, London (2014).

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### **Serpentine Pavilion History**

Serpentine Pavilion architects to date are: Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), 2016; selgascano, 2015; Smiljan Radić, 2014; Sou Fujimoto, 2013; Herzog & de Meuron and Ai Weiwei, 2012; Peter Zumthor, 2011; Jean Nouvel, 2010; Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, SANAA, 2009; Frank Gehry, 2008; Olafur Eliasson and Kjetil Thorsen, 2007; Rem Koolhaas and Cecil Balmond, with Arup, 2006; Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura with Cecil Balmond, Arup, 2005; MVRDV with Arup, 2004 (un-realised); Oscar Niemeyer, 2003; Toyo Ito and Cecil Balmond - with Arup, 2002; Daniel Libeskind with Arup, 2001; and Zaha Hadid, who designed the inaugural Pavillion in 2000. Serpentine Summer Houses architects in 2016 were: Kunlé Adeyemi – NLÉ (Amsterdam/Lagos), Barkow Leibinger (Berlin/New York), Yona Friedman (Paris) and Asif Khan (London).

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TECHNICAL CONSULTANT

David Glover

TECHNICAL ADVISORS

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